

# Vincent

In heaven there are angels. They welcome the souls that have built a solid life and are ready for eternity. However, there is a place where the time traveling angel, in very rare instances, can change the course of events of a living person's life, and grant them a continuation, when death was not the correct course at the time. You are such an angel, and your job, to earn that better-paying promotion at the Heavenly Gates, is to review the files of individuals whose mortal existence ended prematurely, and to correct as best you can the course of events. You come across the file of one Vincent van Gogh.

In the history of the famous, there are those who enjoyed recognition and riches while they lived, and there are those heroic geniuses who left human existence as impoverished and maligned souls, but bequeathed a legacy that once recognized made them more famous than any of their contemporaries, and richer than their wildest imaginations. These tragic men and women blazed new paths whose virtue was only acknowledged once they were gone. This was particularly noticeable in the nineteenth century, when artists such as Edgar Allan Poe, Dostoevsky and Strindberg suffered from the industrial strides of the age and shouldered the intellectual burden of the idea that God was "remote" and "dead," and man "debased." In the world of art, van Gogh would be the most obvious example of the lonely despairing artist that the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century could offer. He was diagnosed at different times with schizophrenia, depression, epilepsy. What he suffered most from was the "maladie du siècle," the loss of belief in God. He was a painter who never sold a single painting in his life, died at 37 by his own hand, mourned by few, but in less than a century his "Irises" would be commanding \$16

million dollars at the Getty Museum in California. Van Gogh was unlike any of the other impressionists, who were stable in their family lives, and picture perfect in their portraits.

There was nothing stable about van Gogh. Even his self-portraits in later years were distinctive only because they depicted him without an ear thanks to that moment of supposed self-immolation after a fight with Paul Gauguin. Yes, they say he cut off your own ear. An interesting case.

Vincent van Gogh was born on March 30, 1853, the first child to survive in a Dutch bourgeois family of six children, the first son of a Dutch pastor, and he was profoundly influenced by the hard-working and pious atmosphere of his parental home in Zundert, Holland. Vincent maintained a close relationship with your younger brother Theo, who would become his financial supporter, Father Confessor, and private viewer of his paintings. He became so affiliated with the French impressionist movement that based on his love of the country, he became more French than the French that lived there. Van Gogh resided in Auvers, St. Remy, and in Arles, and the subject of all of his work were the peasants of France, the warm interiors of Provence, and its free flowing countryside beautiful and moving in its simplicity.

What happened to him? How can you change the course of his actions so that he could finish what he had begun?



1. \* In his day Van Gogh' art incited public scorn,  
But his dark paintings will one day adorn,  
The walls of great museums that will display,  
Impoverished peasants at a rustic buffet,  
In 1883 the blank stares of characters so mundane,  
Did nothing but foster public disdain,  
To Cours Selaya you must now hail,  
Down Alexandre Marie without fail,  
Pass the Pompes Funebres of Lutèce,  
At Rue Gassin is a righteous egress,  
South away from Justice's play,  
On the words Liberté ,Egalité and Fraternité,  
To the square of flowers continue southeast,  
Across from the socca cooks your eyes will feast,  
The yellow shadow of misery,

Underscores the peasants' psyche,  
A grocer awaits with produce of the land,  
Their freedom food is soon at hand.



2. Depression coupled with the drink,  
Caused your artist at twenty to flounder and sink,  
The root of the issue lies at a resort,  
A pro's opposite is your Western port,  
The seaside route to follow in your car,  
But JLP is a bit too far.  
Over Napoleon's bridge of November eleventh,  
Time's loss Ave Verdun will soon replevin,  
Park at a lot in view of the boats,  
Two blocks through a portal lies your antidote  
An underground cave across from the stand,  
The bar's right is you'll soon command,  
Though self-portraits made poor Van wince,  
What was missing was self-confidence,  
Find the thing that's present in his pose,  
That brim that floats above his nose,  
To get the bottle from Frederic,  
Sing your bag's lyrics tongue and cheek,  
To relay the right festive vibe,  
There's something for passengers to first imbibe.



3. To properly answer your artists' call,  
Venture back up Ave des Alpes to St. Paul,  
You'll need to get to the Route de Serres,  
Heading back on the Bord de Mer,  
6098 to 6007 to 2085,  
At the 336 you'll soon arrive,  
The GPS stars won't guide you in Provence,  
Unless you add that the town's "de Vence."  
A village gateway is your path,  
Under the canons of Van Gogh's wrath  
His imagination had broken free of filters,  
But the sky's chaos *mirrored* a mind off kilter.  
Down Rue Grande you'll find a merchant's accolade,  
In the form of a hand sewn sleeping aid.



4. \* Van Gogh's black period in Auvers,  
Did little to welcome the devout prayer,  
Save him from the impending despair,  
His spirit is stifled without some air  
You must **Maximize** his soul's exposure,  
In a place without such closure.

In this house of worship feel free to roam  
Finished in 1412 for Saint Baume,  
Help Van Gogh resurrect his belief in God,  
An hour and twenty minutes you're now to plod,  
Your western direction will undulate,  
Pass Cannes and Le Muy on the A-8,  
Toward Auriol on exit 34,  
Welcome to Faith's open door.

**CHECK IN TO YOUR AUBERGE NEXT,  
AND A PHOTO OF THAT ACT YOU'LL TEXT,  
AT LEAST TWO OF YOU WITH CLOCK ON WALL,  
MUST POSE TO REGISTER YOUR LANDFALL.**

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5. As an Aix-patriot from the land of the Dutch,

It's not artistic inspiration Van lacks so much,

But balance between the love of nature's magical pace,

And his disdain for the greed of the human race,

It would be key for the two to be mixed,

To see if they can co-exist,

Then your subject would be more stable,

A righteous path will soon enable,

If you're ready for pedestrian fare,

An Italian walk and Thiers will take you towards a square,

Go northwest to a place to preach,

And leftward where your goal's in reach,

Just north of the Post and Place Richelme,

You'll soon be at your journey's helm,

There you can try to catch a feel,

Across from the Hotel de Ville,

Vincent suffered from **Gourmandise**,

A rightful need you can appease,

**Counter** it now with the fruit from trees,

That are often shaped by coastal breeze.



6. \* Though Vincent's art was so **S u R r E A L**,

Your angel's job is still to close the deal,  
To save Vincent from suicidal doubt,  
A-8 to A-7 is the route,  
A-54 to N113,  
Exit 5 to locate an old crime scene,  
A downward spiral you might prevent,  
To December 22, 1888 you're sent,  
Van Gogh and Gauguin were deep felt friends,  
Is it too late to make amends?  
Much has been said about their row,  
A crisis later, where did Van go?  
Van Gogh's dream of an artist's community  
Gauguin despised with impunity,  
Research showed in later years,  
That it wasn't Vincent who cut off his ear,  
It was a swipe of Gauguin's épée,  
That left Vincent's earlobe in decay,  
Vincent took the blame,  
By claiming he'd cut it off in a migraine,  
Why were only fencing gloves and mask restored,  
What did Gauguin do with his fencing sword?  
The word on the streets is that it was thrown,  
Into the deep blue waters of the Rhone,  
Park soon off Blvd des Lices,

Walk up Jean Jauré to police,  
Through a Republican Square there's little risk,  
Under the shade of an obelisk,  
A left on Calade to Rue de Palais,  
And up to conclude this new foray.



7. \* Vincent gave new meaning to his peers,  
Of the expression "Lend me your ears"  
Solved is the mystery of Van Gogh's lobe,  
Sympathy flows from across the globe,  
Your poor artist once maligned,  
Must be released from institutional confines,  
In St. Remy he was committed by rivals of Monet's ilk,  
And sharks of the art world that swindle and bilk,  
To pull him from the precipice of suicide,  
Exhibition XX needs a masterwork, the source of greatest pride,  
Though 571 to 99 finds colder climes,  
Pass Hotel Gounod, and hug the right to better times,  
The road to the asylum off Vincent Van Gogh is circuitous,  
The Maillane turn from village circle would be fortuitous.



8.



Fr.

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Fr.

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Fr.



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Is the place for your next drop,  
All heaven's work to save a soul in need,  
Theo's advice is all that's left to heed,  
Says he, a bottle made from a certain grape,  
Will tempt Vincent from his escape,  
A splash of papal elixir will efface inhibitions,  
To wildly paint his greatest work for exhibitions,  
Back to Remy town to follow the flow,  
On village circle Victor Hugo,  
Three exits later at one o'clock,  
Off Schweitzer tangent is where you'll rock,  
99 serves you to D-30,  
Up A-7 to Sorgues and west, get down and dirty,  
To obtain that hearty boisson,  
***Il faut chanter la chanson!***  
So the vintners don't grumble "Please don't bore us!"  
Sync your bag's song with recorded chorus.

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## LITTLE CLUES

1. In potato

Defeat rendered Van Gogh absinthe-minded,  
Through the Port's portal you're sure to find it,  
Head west down the English Promenade,  
To a Masochist Marquis' corner at 25 Cours, a short Balade.

2. In straw hat at Absinthe bar

Your subject's ego should find respite,  
From the doubt that rules him like a despot,  
His masterpiece is *en demande*,  
At the atelier at 62 Rue Grande.

3. In Starry Night pillow **(church)**

A doorless sanctuary gives no reprieve,  
For the masses left there to grieve,  
The pews should be filled to hear,  
The pulpit's sermon rendered here.

4. **Under Pulpit Basilique St. Maximin**

Head to a place that's Aix-cellent  
It's west on A8 that you're now sent,  
The second exit after the Pont de L'Arc,  
At 68 Roi René you'll board and park,  
Ave des Belges to Hugo for your reward,  
Check in quickly at the Hotel Concorde.

5. Box of candies at Cour Gourmande

Head north to a place of ambience and bruit,  
Known as your subject's Café de Nuit,  
At 11 Place du Forum,  
Near the front doors, please show decorum.

6. At Café La Nuit/ Café van Gogh

Pass Irises and self-portraits that stare from garden walls

Stroll down the walkway of the asylum of St. Paul-de-Mausole,

Around the corner from his Starry Night,

A figure stands in memoriam of the site.

7. In sunflower statue

At Eddie Ferraud's winery be on your guard,

A red nosed elf stands like a bard,

At nine's the address named for a French general,

Let not redemption remain ephemeral.

8. Behind bottle label on red wine at Eddie's

The painting s finished , Vincent's talent extolled!

The work for thousands of francs is sold!

Turn it over and you'll view

Where the celebration's waiting at the grand Chateau Bijou!

## Other

Conservatively on a writer's street your skills are honed,  
There 's little time to be miserable, mon cher,  
For on King Rene a left you'll dare,  
At Hotel Concord you'll find a lot,  
That will serve for now as your parking spot.

Van Gogh's brushstrokes have always projected,  
Nature's treed landscapes much respected,  
Your artist has a registered **GourmOandise**,  
His taste buds you're sure to soon appease.

Four blocks south of Mirabeau,  
Head down Avenue Victor Hugo,  
At 68 Blvd. du Roi Rene you'll find your hoard,,  
Park and check in at the Hotel Concorde.